

News from Rep. Stephanie Herseth

For Immediate Release

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HERSETH MEETS WITH PRESIDENT BUSH ON IRAQ

Herseth: Iraq is Most Important Policy Question Facing Our Country and it Demands Bipartisan Solution

December 14, 2005, Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth met with President George W. Bush, his national security team and a select group of Members of Congress to discuss the ongoing efforts in Iraq this morning. The meeting included Vice President Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Gen. Peter Pace, the incoming Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, as well as Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and General George Casey, commander of the forces in Iraq who participated via satellite. The meeting took place at the White House.

Herseth said, "We had a good, frank conversation about what we need to do to complete our mission and I'm very pleased that the President has sought out bipartisan input on the war. Iraq is the most important public policy question facing our country, and while I understand that there are passionate feelings on both sides of the issue, we owe it to the troops overseas to craft a practical strategy for Iraq that enjoys bipartisan support."

The meeting provided the Members of Congress an opportunity to engage in a dialogue about the status of the war in Iraq, and to provide their thoughts about what needs to be done after tomorrow's election and beyond. Other members in attendance included Ike Skelton, (D-MO), Ranking member on Armed Services, Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA), Ranking Member on Intelligence, and Rep. John Spratt (D-SC).

Today's meeting comes one day before Iraq's first full-term parliamentary election since the fall of Saddam Hussein. Herseth said, "This election is an important landmark for the people of Iraq, and a key step in turning control of Iraq over to the Iraqi people. We will watch this progress closely as we continue to implement a policy that finishes the job, gets our troops home, and

returns control of Iraq to the Iraqi people.”

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Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth serves South Dakota in the U.S. House of Representatives . She is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of moderate Democrats committed to fiscal discipline and strong national security, and is co-chair of the Rural Working Group, which is dedicated to raising the profile of issues important to rural America. She also serves on three committees vital to South Dakota’s interests. Agriculture, Veterans’ Affairs and Resources.